

**Ward 7 Education Council Discussion  
Ron Brown Middle School and Empowering Males of Color Specialty High School  
Deanwood Recreation Center, October 15, 2015**

**Opportunities for Ward 7 at Ron Brown**

- What should go in Ron Brown? Already have been discussing these issues in the neighborhood. Ward 7 associations, ANCs, civic leaders are invested in planning and want to be engaged with public agencies. ***“We don’t want another decision made without us being involved; we need our recommendations in black and white.”***
- Strong desire for quality educational programs in Ward 7 neighborhoods, PK-12<sup>th</sup> grade. ***“Programming is the entire issue - - that’s why our kids are leaving.”***
- Need for Ward 7 middle school was accepted as a recommendation in current capital budget – huge void at middle school level in Ward 7. ***“It’s a middle school catastrophe . . . we can’t put our students in a position where they have to go to the other end of town.”***
- Clear need for concentrated supports of all kinds for African American secondary boys may be addressed with proposed Empowering Males of Color High School (EMOC)

**Background Information (see handouts from 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund)**

**Current DGS RFP for Design/Build Contractor for EMOC HS at Ron Brown:**

- Request For Proposal (RFP) issued for \$40 million Design/Build contract for Empowering Males of Color High School (EMOC) at Ron Brown; due October 21<sup>st</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Ron Brown walk-through with DGS Friday, 10/16/15 at 1PM; show up in the parking lot
- DC capital budget provides \$47 million for a Ward 7 Specialty School for “planning and modernization of application middle school” at Ron Brown for FY 2016 and FY2017
- RFP schedule requires Ron Brown assembly space, gym, administration and enough classrooms for 150 9<sup>th</sup> graders to be finished August 2016 with the rest finished August 2017 with construction taking place in occupied Ron Brown.
- RFP for design and construction for EMOC at Ron Brown was issued with boilerplate ed spec
- DC Auditor has raised several issues about RFP process
- No contract yet for EMOC between DCPS and Urban Prep Charter in Chicago

**11 to 13 Year Olds in Kelly Miller MS Boundary**

- There are an estimated 1,800, 11-13 year old students in the boundary for Kelly Miller – which has a capacity of 600. Even adding charter school capacity, there are 400+ middle school age students living in-bounds for Kelly Miller who don’t have school space in Ward 7.
- Ron Brown’s current capacity is close to 1,000 students; from a space perspective Ron Brown can house a middle school (300-400) in addition to the EMOC high school (400-500).

### **Woodson capacity for transitional location for 150 9<sup>th</sup> graders**

- Woodson's capacity is 1000 with last year's enrollment at 639; this year's is about 720.

### **Proposals introduced and discussed at the meeting:**

- Proposal 1: Create transitional 9<sup>th</sup> grade EMOC space at H.D. Woodson for 2016-17 year (150 students) and then move into modernized Ron Brown in 2017-18
- Proposal 2: Co-locate specialty middle school at Ron Brown with EMOC
- Proposal 3: After EMOC moves into permanent space use the space used by EMOC at Woodson to support Woodson academies.
- Proposal 4: Take another look at Ward 7 DCPS school boundaries and feeder patterns.
- Proposal 5: Develop school specific educational programming at each of the Ward 7 elementary schools to build quality from elementary to middle to high school
- Proposal 6: Include other Ward 7 closed school locations in planning for education in Ward 7.

### **Preliminary Discussion of Proposals:**

#### **Proposal 1: Create transitional 9<sup>th</sup> grade EMOC space at H.D. Woodson for 2016-17 year (150 students) and then move into modernized Ron Brown in 2017-18**

- What's the impact of the EMOC high school on Woodson's growth?
- How well will the culture of EMOC and of Woodson mix?
- No notice or detail from DCPS on planning for Ron Brown - - for EMOC or Middle School
- Boundary for the Emerging Males of Color School is the whole city

#### **Proposal 2: Permanently co-locate specialty middle school with EMOC at Ron Brown**

- Unsure if students from middle school should be housed with a high school
- McKinley Tech High School and McKinley middle school, CHEC and Lincoln have successful partnerships between selective high schools and non-selective middle schools
- This high school is for boys only - - and the whole city. Where do the girls go?
- There is something to be said about concentration and quality control - EMOC gives males a place where they can thrive; it is necessary to establish a culture of excellence with our African American males.

- *“This was not our first choice, [middle school was] but we have an opportunity from the Mayor (for the EMOC) and we don’t want to be left out with nothing.”*
- Empowering Males of Color High School Initiative
  - Who is this program for? – TAG, lottery, neediest?
  - What’s the impact on Woodson enrollment?
  - What about the girls?
  - How do we make sure that it serves our students
  - We need somewhere to send our young black men where they can be nurtured
- EMOC proposal needs better planning and more construction time; no public engagement in educational specifications for EMOC

**Is it a problem that all those middle school aged students currently don’t have a right to attend a middle school in Ward 7 if they want to?**

- If there is no Ron Brown, we may not have the opportunity to build on the work that is being done at the elementary school level, we will still have to go across town.
- The need in Ward 7 is not for another high school, we need another middle school
- Need a middle school to support the students to get into Woodson with STEM programming
- Kids have to travel out of the ward to get a good middle school experience right now. There aren’t those opportunities at the middle school level in Ward 7.
  - Kelly Miller already has trailers
  - No longer have education campus, closed 3+ middle schools over the years. (Evans, Fletcher-Johnson, Merritt, Ron Brown)
- Crucial age is middle school; a lot of kids are going through a lot of changes and development.

**Proposal 3: After EMOC moves into permanent space use the space used by EMOC at Woodson to support Woodson academies.**

- We need a holistic and honest conversation about the schools in our Ward
  - What is the end goal of this process?
  - Getting all of this done is going to be very difficult

**Proposal 4: Take another look at Ward 7 DCPS school boundaries and feeder patterns.**

- We have an issue with a mass migration of students who leave the Ward every day and then get home very late at night
  - Right now the only place our kids can go to quality middle school is on the other end of town
- Woodson’s boundary is identical to Kelly Miller’s; and Kelly Miller has feeder rights to Eastern and Woodson, so unlike all other DCPS community HS, Woodson has NO MS fully aligned to feed into it.
- Kelly Miller – mayor saying the students go to Eastern and Woodson
- Why does Sousa go into Anacostia?
- How should charters and DCPS schools interact?

### **Proposal 5: Develop school specific educational programming at each of the Ward 7 elementary schools to build quality from elementary to middle to high school**

- We need to focus on bringing in programming to other schools here in Ward 7.
- The issue in DCPS is dealing with Programming
- Great Programming Required in Ward 7 DCPS schools – Make schools people want to come to in Ward 7 from elementary, through middle and high school
- Starts at the elementary school level
  - Every elementary school needs an identity
  - Language Immersion school at Houston Elementary
  - STEM at Aiton
  - We need to reach students at a younger age to motivate and push them to be more successful and that will help – if we are targeting at risk youth;
- Houston has dual language immersion, why only 1 in Ward7?
- Why aren't there STEM focused elementary schools and a MS in Ward 7 focusing on STEM to prepare students for Woodson?
- Need to create schools that students want to go to, that interests the students,

### **Proposal 6: Include other Ward 7 closed school locations in planning for education in Ward 7.**

- Ron Brown is the only Middle School building left for DCPS in the far NE
  - Kenilworth is still in DCPS inventory, but is elementary school space
  - Davis is still in DCPS inventory, but elementary school space - - it's too far south
  - Fletcher Johnson is large but on the south side of the ward, and not in DCPS inventory - - but the mayor could change that
  - Sousa is half full
  - There are a lot of schools that don't really know what is going on with the entire EMOC initiative, it is disturbing that the RFP is out

### **Next Steps:**

#### **Need for Planning for Ward 7 DCPS schools**

- Need Ward 7 plan and public engagement in planning for Ron Brown:
- Ward 7 Ed. Council needs to come up with a viable plan and a unified voice.
- Need to develop a proposal to present to DCPS for a viable middle school and all the things we want in it
- We need vertical alignment and a comprehensive plan, and it can't be reactionary
- DCPS should ensure that we have what we need to do the planning
  - Ward 7 Planning Task Force?
- Get support for community driven educational facility plans from other communities (e.g. Ward 4 Alliance—which had recommendation in Student Assignment Proposals and in capital budget to re-open MacFarland MS)
- Get support for a community driven public process from DCPS, DGS, DME and Mayor to address middle school-age student needs based on student assignment committee

recommendations for Ward 7 middle school programming and school and the FY2016 capital budget for specialty MS

- Do more research
  - Need a survey and taskforce of parents to get their input, see what their concerns are and make sure that Parents on programming – what do we want, elementary; middle; high school?
  - Get an inventory of programs and federal dollars that should be going to our neediest students - - make sure it gets to them.
  - Update data on where Ward 7 resident students are going to school
- Reach out to the EMOC – contact Mr. King’s team at Urban Prep
- Schedule additional public meetings and outreach
- Share notes from October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting

### Concerns on Next Steps

- Sometimes when dealing with politicians, if you don’t give them what they want you end up with nothing
- We all work together, but sometimes we want to work as single neighborhoods – dual roles; The Boundary for a middle school in Ron Brown is bigger than Deanwood – includes Neval Thomas, Kenilworth and River Terrace
- Talk is cheap, what assurances do we have that what we discuss will happen
- Actions speak louder than words, how do we make sure that what we say is actually achieved?
- We need to make sure that our culture is included in all of this

### In attendance:

1. Michael Chambers III, Deanwood Library Staff
2. Cinque Culver, Ward 7 Ed. Council, River Terrace Civic Association
3. Dorothy Douglas, ANC 7D03 Commissioner, former State Board of Ed. Rep.
4. Wendell Felder, Ward 7 Representative to the Mayor’s Office
5. Mary Filardo, 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund
6. Laura Fuchs, Ward 7 Ed. Council, Woodson High School
7. Antawan Holmes, ANC 7C07 Commissioner, Houston Elementary School
8. Faith Gibson-Hubbard, State Board of Ed., Chief Student Advocate
9. Nancy Huvendick, 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund
10. Henry Jones, DC Social Worker
11. LaTonya Jones
12. Cathy Reilly, Sr. High Alliance (SHAPPE)
13. David Smith, Deanwood Civic Association
14. Sharona Robinson, DCPS Community Action Coordinator, Wards 7&8
15. Eboni Rose Thompson, Ward 7 Ed. Council, ANC 7F02 Commissioner
16. Tina Thompson, Neval Thomas Elementary School
17. Michael White, Neval Thomas Elementary School
18. Karen Williams, State Board. of Ed., Hillcrest Community Civic Association